

1349.

SOME
OBSERVATIONS
ON A LATE
ADDRESS
TO THE
CITIZENS
OF
DUBLIN, *Citizens.*
WITH THOUGHTS
ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED FOR J. MILLIKEN, NO. 32, GRAFTON-STREET.

1797.

T H O U G H T S

ON THE

PRESENT CRISIS, &c. &c.

THE present period appears to form a crisis in the fate of Europe, so totally new, and at the same time, so critically momentous, that it cannot be viewed by the best judging mind, without anxiety, or by the boldest, without alarm.

A sort of mental pestilence has gone abroad spreading its poisonous influence far, and wide.

Opinions and principles as novel to the bulk of mankind, as they are wild, daring, and impracticable, tho' to the ignorant, flattering and delusive; have burst like a torrent upon the minds of men—a torrent that has swept, and still threatens to sweep before it, the very elementary principles of all governments—all the bands by which civilized society are held together, all the ties that unite mankind with each other, that connect them with their rulers, or even with their God.—Like the fiery inundation of a volcanic eruption, its progress has been marked by desolation. Like

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ON THE PRESENT CRISIS

WITH THOUGHTS

ON THE

CITIZEN

TO THE

ADDRESS

OF A LATE

OF OBSERVATIONS

1807

PRINTED BY H. MUMFORD, NO. 25, CHANCERY STREET

D. B. M. L.

THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR

duced some bad effects, but whatever such effects may be, " sufficient to those abuses are the evils thereof," and they are mistaken friends to their country, who in a fit of cynical resentment, would magnify them beyond truth in theory, and beyond fact in practice, ascribe to them consequences with which they have no connection, and load them with a guilt not belonging to them, merely for the purpose of heaping odium on that government, which in so perilous a moment, hesitates about the consequence of admitting, even well intentioned and friendly Reformers, into the citadel of the constitution, assailed as it is at the same moment, by enemies who seek not Reform, and whom Reform therefore might not satisfy.

" The Reformers," it is said in reply, " would assist you to defend that citadel against its enemies." —At another period they might; but the question is, whether it be prudent to open the gates, just at that critical moment, when its determined enemies are *close at the heels* of its discontented friends? who will answer for it, that while you are admitting the one, the others will not rush in along with them? This is a question, upon which the best and wisest men may differ; it is one, respecting which, government ought to pause, before it decides; for in truth, whatever may have been the case, *prior* to the revolution in France, it is *not*, as we have been told it is—it is *not* the spirit of Reform which has *now* gone forth—it is not that, with which government has to contend —It is the angry spirit of boundless innovation, inflamed by a fierce and unrelenting enthusiasm, that, with a giant's step, stalks over devoted Europe.

The spirit of salutary Reform, is in its progress slow, mild, cautious, discriminating; it corrects with the tenderness of a parental hand.—The march of Innovation is rapid, fierce, heedless, undistinguishing—it destroys, with the vengeance of a foe. Who does

that too,—as the natural philosopher, weeping over the still smoking ruins, caused by so terrible a convulsion of the elements; where fields but just before, covered with population and luxuriant fruitfulness, are at once converted into a dreary, and a dreadful waste; as *he* will find but small consolation in the reflection, that in the lapse of future ages, those fields may again possess a soil even richer than that which had been before destroyed:—so the moral philosopher, deploring the recent horrors produced by the other no less fatal convulsion of the minds of men; will scarcely console himself with the idea, that possibly when this chaos of evil shall have ceased, a new order of things may arise, that will restore, (perchance improved) the blessings of civilized society, and of regular government.—It is the dreadful *interval* that must appal him—an interval of horror, blood, and devastation—which must at all events rob him of a portion of his short-lived being, by rendering it wretched; in which he may himself perish; and which, should he survive, he must feel the price he had paid too high, for any improvement that could follow a crisis so destructive and terrible, and whose duration, none could previously calculate.

But we are told “adopt Reform and oppose it to
“the spirit of Révolution—combat the threatened
“mischiefs, by correcting the abuses of the govern-
“ment and the constitution—for *to these alone*, are
“owing the perils that hang around you.”

Assuredly, no true friend to the government or the constitution, will defend the abuses of either—but the sincerest friend to both, may with the strictest justice, and the strictest truth, *deny*, that in these kingdoms at least, it is to those abuses, that the mischiefs with which the present period seems pregnant, ought to be attributed.—The abuses complained of may have produced

not see it is the latter spirit, not the former, which now fills, agitates, and maddens the minds of men?

This terrible visitation, which at the present moment threatens us, has not its origin in these kingdoms; it was wafted to us from foreign countries, in the pestilential breath of those self denominated philosophers, the apostles of the *new lights*; a species of political atheists, that some time since arose in France, who, believing in no principle, respecting no institution, of ancient authority, either of their own, or of any other nation; under the pretence of correcting the corruptions, and reforming the abuses of the French government in church and state, in reality levelled their poisonous shafts, at whatever had hitherto justly commanded the obedience, the respect, or the reverence of mankind.

The corruptions and abuses of foreign governments—(which, when viewed with reference to such as may subsist in our own, are like great crimes, compared with venial trespasses)--had from their enormity, paved the way for the success of the preachers of the new doctrines; and the American revolution was the political miracle, adduced by them, in pretended confirmation of their profane gospel, to dazzle the eyes, and confound the understandings of their deluded disciples.

Not satisfied with teaching them to renounce *blind* obedience; to disdain *servile* respect; to laugh at *superstitious* reverence;---they aimed at the destruction of the very *principles themselves*, of all human obedience, however due; of all human respect, however deserved; of all human reverence, however sanctioned.

These principles, founded on the propensities, feelings, and passions of man; with which Providence, designing him for civilized society, had plentifully supplied his unsophisticated nature; furnish all those
holds

holds of his heart and mind, which render him susceptible of being governed by his fellow creatures: and it is alone, by means of such holds of the public mind of society, that any human government can exist.

As man is individually the weakest, among the higher order of animals tho' collectively the strongest, the uncontaminated mind of man, will in society be ruled by its individual sensations; that mixture of good and evil, which is the lot of humanity: that sense of his own weakness: of his own individual inability, whether physical or moral, to obtain that good, or to guard against that evil; will naturally incline him to look to the assistance and support of others, whom he must feel to be his superiors, in consequence of the obvious and striking inequality of powers, both of body and of mind, which God for the wisest purposes has eternally decreed, should exist among the sons of men. Hence the rudiments of subordination; the origin of the power of temporal chiefs; the source of social obedience; and the foundation of civil society. The wonderful phenomena of nature by which man is surrounded, passing his understanding, but evincing the power of his Creator; these too must fill his mind with hopes of future good, to be obtained only at the hands of the Almighty; or with fears of future evil, from which those hands alone can protect him; hence the origin of the sense of religion; and religious awe, having once taken possession of the human heart, it will appear in a thousand different shapes, all equally conducive to the good order of society; it will imperceptibly transfer itself in his mind, from one object to another; from the Creator to the prophet; from the prophet to the priest; from the priest to the temporal ruler; and from him to all subordinate established authorities. Here then is a chain descending from heaven to earth, embraced by the natural propensities of man, and binding his otherwise wayward
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and wilful passions, for the purpose of rendering him a fit member of civilized society, by inspiring him with obedience to its laws, and respect for its constituted authorities.

Such being the holds upon the unsophisticated mind of man, by which alone, temporal authority can govern him in civilized societies; it follows that of whatever abuses or crimes the priesthood of other countries may have been guilty, of whatever abuses or crimes their temporal governments may have been guilty; of whatever unfair advantage, both may have taken of those holds of the mind of man, with which Providence had supplied it for the best of purposes, for the benefit of the governed, as well as of their rulers, civil or ecclesiastical, but which those rulers had, in too many instances, converted entirely to their own advantage;—still this plain moral and political maxim ought to have been attended to,—that in reforming these abuses, however enormous, the reformers should have taken special care, not to have extirpated from the mind of man, *those very holds themselves*, without which even the best of political institutions, cannot bind him to fulfil the duties of civilized society. Wide is the difference between taking the helm out of the hands of weak, unskilful, or faithless pilots, and tearing the *rudder* from the vessel. Yet this is precisely what those pious professors of the *new lights*, in the fury of their blind zeal, accomplished in France; and what they have nearly effected in every other country that has been contaminated with their doctrines; their object seemed to be, to tear from the mind of man every moral means of guiding it; and extirpate from it every *hold*, by which any government whatever can maintain itself. They aimed their deadly blows, not at the corruptions of the priesthood, but at the altar of God, and levelling to the earth, the temple itself of the Almighty, buried religion under its ruins. It was thus they wrenched
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from the human mind those great *holds* of man, the feelings of piety, of reverence, and of awe towards his Creator. In the same spirit they assailed, not the *abuses* of monarchy, but monarchy itself; and laying the throne in dust, rooted out of the human heart, those other holds of man, the sentiments of respect, of attachment, or of loyalty towards his earthly rulers.

But not satisfied with this present annihilation of all the moral means, by which civilized societies have hitherto been governed, the next object of these furious teachers of the new lights, was to prevent the future possible *return*, of those moral means to the minds of men. Man left to the sense of his *individual weakness*, might, they apprehended, have relapsed into those moral and social virtues, which, to that sense of his own weakness, in a great measure owe their birth. They therefore revealed to him, the formidable secret of his *collective strength politically organized*, that he might be no longer ruled by his individual sensations, tho' planted in his breast by the hand of God, for the very purpose of fitting him for the duties of civil society. Thus, having first emptied his mind of every virtue that connects the human being with his Creator; or the subject with his ruler, of every benevolent, moral, or social principle that qualifies man for obedience to authority; they armed him with this strength, for his *own abuse* of power; they steeled his heart against every warm and generous feeling of affection and reverence for the *persons* of those placed in authority, even by himself, that those new idols, fashioned by their hands, the abstract principles of natural rights, and the doctrine of the equality of mankind, might engross the whole of his worship. And in order to supply the vacancy in his mind, occasioned by the absence of those virtues they had banished from it, these apostles of anarchy proceeded to awaken, flatter, and bring into action among their disciples, the worst passions of the human heart;

heart; pride, envy, and hatred. These passions, detestable as they are in minds formed by education; polished by manners, and accustomed to conceal or restrain their feelings: What must be their effect upon the untaught understanding of gross and brutal ignorance? What must be their effect, when acting on that ignorance, upon the happiness, or even the existence of civil society? Has not Providence eternally decreed that the majority of mankind must labour, must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow? Has it not decreed, for instance, that a vast portion of every civilized society, must of necessity, be attached to the plough and the spade: that they must provide their means of living with much labour; and pass their hard earned life, with few enjoyments? Is not this a condition annexed to the very nature of civil society? Is it not the lot of humanity; so ordained by the Almighty? Is it in the power of any government to dispense with this condition, or to abrogate this divine ordinance? When the teachers of the new lights, tell the peasant whose lot this is, that all men are equal, that all distinctions of rank, that all privileged classes in society, are usurpations upon the natural equality of mankind, what is it they do? They awaken *pride* in his mind, to whom to render his lot in life supportable, *humility* was indispensable; they fill his mind with discontent at his station in society, they teach him to consider the dispensations of Providence, as the crimes of government, to imagine *the ills to which flesh is heir*, to be evils growing out of the political constitution of his country, which may be removed by changing that constitution: When they tell him that all men have equal rights; how will *he* construe this? That all men have an equal right to the enjoyment of the good things of this life; true in theory, but utterly impossible in practice; his heart will embrace the flattering theory; but his uninformed understanding will not convince him of the impossibility of the practice. Will not this then beget in his mind the feelings of
 envy

envy towards those, who apparently enjoy such good things? Will not that envy be accompanied by its usual attendant, hatred? Will he not hate all above him? What then becomes of the fundamental principles of civil society, subordination, and consequent respect for superiors? When they tell him that he ought to be bound by no law, but that to which he has given his own assent? When they teach him the grossly mistaken principle of *self-legislation*, they cannot make him comprehend that principle, for in truth and reason, with respect to individuals, it has no existence; but they can make him averse to all laws, not made by himself; and hostile to all governments, in which, as he is told, this principle either does not prevail at all, or not to the degree it ought. When too, the supposed truth and authority of principles thus inculcated, are backed by the unexampled triumphs of that nation which professes to have adopted them; of that nation which in the course of this luckless war, has compelled astonished Europe, to forget the atrocity of the crimes which marked the outset of their career, in the splendour of their subsequent victories: That nation which has conquered every power, in contact with their immense frontiers: which like Mahomet, has subdued mankind, as much by their *Koran*, as their arms:—What effect must not successes, so unparalleled in the annals of mankind, produce upon the minds of the lower orders of men in other states, who viewing them from a distance, conceive them to be the result of the adoption of principles too flattering to the pride and hopes of the poor in all countries, not to have been warmly embraced by themselves.—They know nothing of France, but that such are the principles she teaches, and that France has triumphed.

It is thus that France has, if the expression may be allowed, *revolutionized* the European mind. There commenced the fierce attacks of that destructive innovation, the spirit of which, from the contagion of example, the zeal of proselytism in the apostles of the
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new doctrines, the infection of the poison, to ignorant or discontented minds, which those new doctrines contained; has spread itself among the lower orders of the inhabitants, even of these kingdoms: nay even among a considerable portion of the subjects of Republican America.

Here then are the true and proximate causes of that dark and restless spirit of discontent, of that fierce hostility towards the established government, of that thirst for innovation, of those wild, impracticable expectations, of bettering their situation, of that growing animosity towards their superiors, of that vulgar and brutal arrogance engendered by the new doctrine of equality,—all of which pervade in a greater or less degree the lower ranks of men in these kingdoms, and have produced in Ireland, the most widely extended, and completely organized conspiracy, that was ever yet hatched in the dark, or that in any country was ever yet conceived by men, of that inferior order of society, to which the conspirators belong.

Yet we have been gravely told by the author of a recent address, that all this accumulation of evil, which that publication admits to exist in this country, does *not* proceed from the causes here stated; but that—"the origin of the evil, the source of the discontent, and the parent of the disturbance,"—are—what?—to collect all the author has said in one view—1st. The unconstitutional influence of the crown, or in other words, the legislative usurpation of the British Cabinet.—2dly, Borough Parliaments.—3dly, The treatment of the Roman Catholics. To these three causes the author solely ascribes the effects, which have, in truth and fact, been produced upon the minds of men, in Ireland, as in other countries, by that political phenomenon, with all its attendant mischiefs, the French Revolution:—that astonishing event, whose terribly extensive influence has reached from the gulph of Venice, to the shores of America.

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As well might the author have attributed the unusual height of a spring tide in Dublin bay, to the accession of waters it receives from the Liffey, the Dodder, and the Poddle.—What—did he forget “the gigantic form” which appears in another part of his own publication?—did he forget—“that a “gigantic form walked the earth at this moment, “who smote crowns with a hundred hands, and opened for the seduction of their subjects, a hundred “arms.—Democracy?”—Had this gigantic form, with his hundred arms opened to seduce the subjects of this realm, *no share* in producing that discontented mind, that perturbed spirit, which has evinced itself in so many parts of the kingdom, by acts of violence, of outrage, of pillage, and of blood—of organized outrage, and systematic bloodshed? Did this giant—meet, in Cabinet influence and Borough Parliaments, with two bigger giants than himself, who were able to effect more mischief than he, with his hundred hands, and hundred arms, could accomplish? Did the author forget that this same gigantic form, Democracy, had a precursor in these kingdoms in the person of Thomas Paine? an apostate Englishman, who hating his country and its constitution, with all that bitter animosity which characterizes apostacy, first promulgated in an English dress, among the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, the doctrines of the political Atheists of France, of those apostles of the new lights, who have at home alike levelled to the earth the throne of their monarch, and the altar of their God: whose object it was to tear from the mind of man, every moral means of guiding it, and extirpate from the human heart, all those *bolds*, without which, no government can maintain its authority. Does the author imagine that such doctrines in a plain English garb, written in a style perfectly suited to their capacities, highly plausible to the understandings of the ignorant, and highly flattering to the feelings of the poor; most artfully calculated to excite
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in men of that description, discontent at their present lot, and wild fantastick, but sanguine hopes of bettering their situation, by carrying into practice the theory of those doctrines:—Does he imagine that this had no share in producing the hostile mind, that prevails among that order of people in Ireland?—Does he think, political principles, which are so potent in their effects upon the lower classes of society, and consequently upon the bulk of mankind, that they have driven mad, four and twenty millions of people in France, that they have revolutionized Italy, great part of Germany, Brabant, the Netherlands and Holland, and which have out-democratized the democracy of the United States of America, and even tainted the subjects of that truly democratic Republic.—Does he think that the work of Thomas Paine, so strongly, so urgently inculcating and enforcing all those mischief-working principles, produced no effect upon the minds of the Irish peasant or lower tradesman?—Does he forget the infernal industry with which that work was distributed over the kingdom? that it was printed and published by subscription, in order to be delivered gratis at every poor man's door throughout the land, with the additions of the most libellous comments upon the constitution, and the most inflammatory, upon the miserable situation of those to whom the poisonous work was addressed, written by the persons who had thus printed and distributed it, with special instructions even to the lowest peasant to hang it over his fire-place, and to read it, the first thing he did when he rose in the morning, and the last, before he lay down to rest. —Does the author forget all this?—Was this work, thus wickedly propagated, the work of a Reformer?—Is Thomas Paine a Reformer?—Does he level his attacks, only at the abuses and corruptions of the constitution?—No.—It is not upon its abuses, it is upon the constitution itself, that Paine vents

vents all his spleen; upon the constitution itself, he pours all the bitterness of his apostate bile.

Of the three estates of which the British constitution is composed, two are hereditary, and must continue so, or it would be no longer the British constitution; these are the crown or monarchical, and the peers or aristocratical part of the constitution. As to the first, the monarchical part, Paine expressly says that, "Monarchy" "is the master fraud which shelters all others," that—"all *hereditary* government is an *imposition* upon mankind," that—"all *hereditary* government is in its nature *tyranny*," that—"a government calling itself free, *with an hereditary office* (that is the British crown) is like a *thorn* in the flesh, that produces a *fermentation*, which endeavours to discharge it," that—"all *hereditary* government over a people is to them a species of slavery, and *representative* government is freedom."

As to the second, the aristocratical parts of the constitution, Paine holds a similar language—he speaks of "the *folly*, *mischief* and *injustice* of *artificial* privileged *distinctions*," and states aristocracy to be "a sort of fungus growing out of the corruption of society, *that cannot be admitted even as a branch of it*."

A few specimens only, are here given of the light in which this great precursor of the gigantic form, Democracy (whom the author of the address describes) views the two hereditary estates of the British constitution—throughout his whole work the same malignant spirit appears against the crown and peerage, both of which he continually treats with clumsy ridicule, suited to the taste, and gross contempt suited to the ignorance of the vulgar, but evidently designed not to rouse them to demand the reform of the abuses of the constitution, but to communicate to them his own hatred of the constitution itself, and to inflame them with his own zeal to work its utter destruction.—Do *they* then who have stood *sponsors* to a work replete with the foulest treason

treason against the constitution—a work that lays the axe to the root of the monarchical and aristocratical branches of it; they who have given a currency to this work throughout the nation, with an infernal industry, surpassing the expectations of its malignant author, do they dare to call themselves the friends of the constitution and the enemies only of its abuses?—No—hear themselves—“ Can, (say the holy brotherhood who have adopted and propagated the doctrines of Paine) “ can the *renovation* in the constitution which “ we all deem necessary, be accomplished by the “ *ways* of the constitution? The evil, says Junius, “ lies too deep to be cured by *any remedy* less than “ some *great convulsion*, which may bring back the “ constitution to its origin principles or utterly de- “ stroy it. Can the right of changing the constitu- “ tion rest any where but in the original *constitutive* “ *power*—the people? Can the *will* of the people be “ known, but by full and fair *convention* to be con- “ stituted on the *plan* which shall come recommended “ on the most *popular authority*? Is there any middle “ state between the extremes of union with Britain “ and total separation, in which the rights of the “ people can be *fully established* and *rest in security*? “ What is the form of government that will secure “ to us our rights with the least expence and the “ greatest benefit?”

In answer to the last question their prophet Paine has asserted it to be a *pure democracy*, the argument, upon which he most relies against monarchy, being its expence. Here then, though the brotherhood, set out with talking of a *renovation* in the constitution, they proceed step by step, on the road to republicanism, guided by the *new lights*, till at length leaving the British constitution behind them, and totally out of sight, they boldly decide in favour of a new form of government, from which on account of its *expence*, monarchy must be excluded.

Is this the language of reform?---Do *they* mean reform who send their missionaries among the unlettered, ignorant mass of the people of Ireland to propagate principles like these? Those missionaries carrying Paine's new political gospel in their hands, which tells the peasant, attached to the plough, and the artizan tied to the loom, that all men are equal, that all distinctions of rank, all privileged classes in society are usurpations upon the natural equality of mankind---that consequently all men have equal rights, and that they should be bound by no law to which they have not given their own assent; when in addition to this the Irish artizan or peasant is told---that a king is nothing more than a political imposition upon mankind---that his hereditary authority is, in its nature tyranny, that it is like a thorn in the flesh, that produces a *fermentation*, which endeavours to discharge it---well indeed may such lessons of insurrection, such precepts of rebellion excite a real fermentation in their minds; but is such a fermentation to be allayed by reform alone---a reform which to be constitutional must leave the inequality of mankind, as it found it---must leave distinctions of rank, and privileged classes, as it found them---must leave the equality of rights---just where it was before; that is, that every man has an equal right to the good things of this life, provided he can earn them---which must still leave the peasant bound by laws, made without even his knowledge, still less his consent, and must leave the regal authority in the full possession of all its constitutional rights; powers and privileges. Surely it is folly to excess, to conceive for a moment, that men holding and propagating such doctrines, really mean nothing more than a reform in the abuses of the constitution, and not its total overthrow---as well might the atheist affect to be a reformer of the corruptions in the christian religion, by denying in the first instance, the existence of a God.

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On the other hand, is it not equal folly to suppose that the minds of the Irish peasantry, and of the other lower classes of men in this kingdom, will by such doctrines be taught to look for nothing more than a reform in the abuses of the constitution? -- or to suppose that such a reform will lay that spirit of hostility towards the established order of things, assuage that thirst for innovation, soften and melt away that animosity towards the higher classes of society, founded in an eager expectation of sharing their spoils, and by that means bettering their own situation, all of which, backed by a fond, and not unfounded hope of receiving the assistance of their allies the French, have, with so much wicked assiduity, been excited among them by these pretended reformers of the abuses, but in fact, determined enemies of the constitution itself.

Did the poor ignorant Irish peasant, or equally poor and ignorant country artizan, did they *understand* the constitution, when thus deluded, thus agitated, thus inflamed, they were taught to hate, not only all constituted authorities, but all whose station in society was higher than their own? --- Did they even know what was meant by the *abuses* of the constitution, so severely reprobated, and so infinitely magnified by the author of the address? --- certainly not, and for this plain reason -- because with such abuses, men in their inferior situation of life, can have no immediate or direct concern; such abuses may indeed affect the higher ranks of the community personally, and many important interests of the state commercially; but whatever mischief they induce, is so very remote from the day labourer, either as not to reach him at all, or it runs through such a variety of channels, which so diffuse, so minutely sub-divide it, before it can reach him, that the peasant's individual share of injury, which can with justice be attributed to any abuses of the constitution, is too insignificant to be
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either distinguished or felt by him. The grievances which press, many of them unavoidably, upon his lot in life, arise from other, and very different causes, now that the Catholic peasant is in every respect placed upon the same footing as his Protestant fellow subject of the same class in life.

Talk therefore to such men, of the unconstitutional influence of the crown; or of the legislative usurpation of the British cabinet; or of the abomination of borough Parliaments; and they will not, they cannot understand you; you might as well read to them a dissertation upon conic sections. But they have been already told by Paine, or by *his* disciples, and *their* apostles, what they understood but too well; and this together with the example and expected support of the French, have produced consequences, that may well make the real friends of the constitution tremble.

He must be grossly ignorant indeed of what has been the state of the disturbed parts of Ireland—he must be totally unacquainted with the temper, and views of a most formidably numerous band of men, who, from all the circumstances stated in the preceding pages, have been deluded, inflamed, and exasperated into a hatred of a constitution they do not understand, and the abuses of which, they consequently cannot comprehend, who could deceive himself with the idea, that the reform of those abuses, ever once entered into their contemplation—abuses, which as has been just observed, did not reach *them*, however they might have affected other ranks of the community, and consequently the reformation of which, though it might have satisfied the latter would not benefit the former, or answer any one of the fallacious expectations, which had been so insidiously instilled into their minds. No, their object, to

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obtain which, they were bound to each other by the most solemn oaths, was to destroy;---not to reform---infatuated by the teachers of the new lights derived from France; inflamed by French principles; filled with hatred towards the constituted authorities of their country; (a hatred which in this kingdom, before French principles were known, had another very deep and very remote source,) and fired by that spirit of fierce and daring innovation, which has shaken Europe to its centre, they sought to establish a new constitution, not to amend the old one. They sought to establish it through terror and dismay, by civil confusion, civil vengeance, and civil bloodshed. Of this, the midnight outrages, and atrocious murders, committed by them, in mere preparation for the intended revolutionary attack, furnish at once a deplorable sample, and an awful warning.

But what says the author of the address---narrowing his views to the confined system of home politics; excluding from his contemplation, what fills all other thinking men with anxiety and alarm; shutting his eyes to the wonderful and rapid political revolution in the minds of men, respecting all the forms of government hitherto known; a mental revolution, which has already subverted one half of the ancient established authorities of Europe, and now threatens the remainder; wilfully blind to the destructive march, and fascinating powers of that spirit of democracy, which has in consequence penetrated into this country, ---he sees nothing---distinguishes nothing---but the errors and the faults of his own government---“ The Historian,” says he, “ of those melancholy and alarming times, censuring, perhaps, both the minister “ and the opposition; and censuring us more for our “ relaxation than violence, will, if a candid man, “ close the sad account by observing---that on the “ whole,

“ whole, the *cause* of the Irish distraction in 1797,
 “ was the *conduct* of the *servants* of government ; en-
 “ deavouring to establish by unlimited bribery, ab-
 “ solute power ; that the system of coercion was a
 “ necessary consequence, and part of the system of
 “ corruption ; and that the two systems in their suc-
 “ cess, would have established a ruthless and horrid
 “ tyranny, tremendous and intolerable, imposed on
 “ the senate by influence, and on the people by arms.”
 Exists there a man, who is in the slightest degree ac-
 quainted with the history of Ireland, from the expul-
 sion of James II. to the present hour, or who pos-
 sessing the faculty of carrying his views out of the
 limits of his own country, has bestowed one thought
 upon the eventful history of Europe, for the last seven
 years, who must not laugh at the assertion, that the
 present *melancholy and alarming times* do not proceed
 from that daring spirit of innovation, pervading the
 lower classes of people, which the example of the
 French revolution, and the insidious pains taken by
 the votaries of France, have excited among them to
 so formidable an extent ? That *this* is the true cause
 of the *Irish distraction*, which now exists, and not the
 conduct of government, or even its deservedly re-
 probated abuses, is evident from the following plain
 and obvious reasons. Let us recur to the charges
 brought by the author of the address against the existing
 government, and the constitution as it now stands ;---
 these are the unconstitutional influence of the crown ;
 the legislative usurpation of the British cabinet ; bo-
 rough Parliaments ; and the treatment of the Roman
 Catholics ; and these, according to that author, are
 the origin of the evil, the source of the discontent,
 and the parent of the disturbance.---Now, from the
 commencement of the reign of William III. to the
 year 1782, a period of near a century, it is fair to
 C 2 ask,

ask, what was the situation of this country, with respect to all the grievances here complained of? and if he, of whom the question is asked, is a candid man, he will answer; that with respect to all the grievances now enumerated, they existed during that period in a ten-fold greater degree than they exist at present. As to the unconstitutional influence of the crown, where is the instance of that influence, which in point of magnitude, can be compared to the power then enjoyed by the Privy-council, (holding their station during the pleasure of the crown), of strangling a bill in its birth?

As to the legislative usurpation of the British cabinet, let the instances be shewn, if any there be, that can bear the slightest comparison, in point of injury to the country, with the atrocious overt acts, of the former legislative usurpation of the British parliament. With respect to borough Parliaments, did they not equally exist during that period? with the highly aggravating circumstance, that during the far greater part of it, such parliaments sat for the life of the king. Lastly, with respect to the treatment of the Roman Catholics:---would ingratitude itself, aided by the blindest folly, dare to compare their situation with that, equally cruel to them, and disgraceful to this country, under which they suffered during the whole of the period alluded to? And yet during that long period of real grievances, both to the Protestant and the Catholic; when the latter groaned under all the evils of the Popery code, and the former was subject in common with the Catholic, to the commercial tyranny of a foreign parliament, and to the domestic tyranny of a Privy-council, wholly dependent on the crown; and usurping a legislative power, that could stifle at will all exertion in either house of parliament; when even the judicial authority of the land, partook of the political slavery of the constitution, from the
habeas

habeas corpus act, and judges bill being denied to Ireland; yet during that whole period did there at any one time appear, any thing similar to that distracted, perturbed and daring spirit, which now renders the times so truly *melancholy and alarming*?—Did there exist any thing which bore the slightest resemblance to what now pervades and agitates a large portion of the inhabitants of this country—to that hostility towards the constitution—to that hatred towards the higher orders of the community—to that warfare against property—to that thirst for innovation—that enthusiastic desire of change, in the fond, but idle hope of obtaining some unascertained good, though the parties know not themselves how, when, or what; yet which is pursued by them, with as much ardour and zeal, as if the advantages sought were clearly defined, and the means of obtaining them, plain and obvious; or lastly, to that decided predilection for the enemy with whom we are actually at war? Did the people of this country *then* doubt, whether the improvement in the constitution, which they deemed it necessary to obtain, could be accomplished by the *ways* of the constitution? Did they *then* look to a *new form of government*, that would secure to them their rights with the least expence, and the greatest benefit?—No, most assuredly; whoever is in the least acquainted with the history of that period, if he answers with truth, must answer decidedly in the negative. That the real grievances, under which Ireland had laboured previous to the year 1782, had long excited a very general spirit of discontent, is most certain; that the example and success of America, whose cause in many respects was the cause of Ireland, had called that spirit into action, is equally certain; but the spirit which then existed, bore no more resemblance to that which now prevails, than the sober admonitions
of

of a friend, resemble the angry threatenings of an enemy. The discontent which existed in 1782, unlike the *Irish distraction* in 1797, generated only the true, the genuine, the salutary spirit of Reform; a spirit guided by political wisdom, and tempered and regulated by the sense of political justice. Never in the annals of their country, did the Irish nation stand so high as at that moment. Where *then*, were the nightly insurrections, the midnight plunderers, the base assassinations, the secret and dark conspirators, leagued with the enemy; for at that time too, we were at war with France?—No,—all was harmony and union, public tranquillity kept pace with public spirit, and a really aggrieved and insulted nation, only claimed of their *own legislature* the restoration of *known, defined, constitutional* rights, with the firmness of men, but with the attachment and duty of subjects. Even while their grievances remained undressed, the same just and constitutional spirit which taught them to vindicate the liberties of their country, equally impelled them to defend it against a foreign enemy. If then for the space of near a century, previous to the year 1782, the most real grievances exciting the best founded dissatisfaction, and the greatest outrages of the constitution, exceeding beyond a possibility of comparison, any abuses of which government may have since been guilty; if these galling and goading circumstances never produced any thing similar, (to use the words of the author of the address) to *the Irish distraction* of the present day—what could have produced it subsequently to the year 1782?—Was it the redress of *all* the grievances then complained of? Was it the recognition of the independence of the Irish legislature? Was it the repeal of Poining's law, and of the perpetual mutiny bill? Was it the acquisition of the habeas corpus act, of the Judges bill, and of a free trade? Was it, at a later period, the Catholic bill; granting
much

much more than had been asked by the Catholic petition? Was it the pension bill, limiting the amount of pensions; the place bill, laying the foundation, at least, of a limitation of the influence of the crown; or the treasury bill, rendering the Irish servants of government, responsible to their country for the disposal of its revenues? and last of all, was it the equal construction of the navigation act, so long demanded, and like all the other great constitutional and commercial advantages which have been just enumerated, so constantly and so tenaciously withheld? Are these the causes of the *present Irish distraction*?—!!!

Who does not remember the address of the House of Commons in 1782—it is to be presumed, the author of the address to the citizens of Dublin in 1797, has not forgot it)—an address, breathing satisfaction and gratitude in every line, and concluding by pledging the country to stand or fall by the fortunes of Great Britain? Who does not remember the rapid and unexampled progress, in every species of national prosperity, which this country made from the year 1782 till 1790, when the dark and portentous political cloud, raised in the European hemisphere by the French Revolution, first began to overshadow the land. A short-lived agitation it is true, took place in 1783, when an assembly of delegates met in Dublin, for the purpose of forcing a Parliamentary Reform upon the House of Commons, at that time sitting; the object of which assembly of delegates, was, the abolition of borough Parliaments; now represented by the author of the address, as the master evil of the state; as the parent vice, which has engendered every abuse of government. They were opposed, and the author of the address may recollect by whom—they were opposed, and justly, upon the ground that parliament ought not to yield to the intimidation of *armed* men, even of men who had deserved so well of their country

birth to other causes, with which government had no concern, but to lament their existence? Is it politic to do so? for in what consists the pressing danger of the present melancholy and alarming times? Is it not in that fierce hostility towards all established governments, which marks the spirit of these times? Is it wise at such a period, to foment and justify that hostility? If it be neither candid nor politic at such a period, to bring groundless charges against the existing government, with respect to the past; is it wise, in a real friend to the constitution, to preoccupy the *future* by filling it with Hydras, the creation of his own heated fancy, in order to insure the *continuation* of that hostile mind towards established authorities? Having charged the government with "endeavouring to establish by "unlimited bribery, absolute power;" the author of the address proceeds to state, "that the system of coercion was a necessary consequence, and part of the "system of corruption, and the two systems in their "success, would have established *a ruthless and horrid "tyranny, tremendous and intolerable*, imposed on the "senate by *influence*, and on the people by *arms*.

A ruthless, horrid, tremendous and intolerable tyranny! Is the future prospect held out, to *conciliate* the already hostile spirit, which constitutes the chief danger of the present alarming period! Is this wisdom? Is it *conciliation*, so strongly recommended by the author? But what is the sense of this passage, containing so angry a denunciation? That tyranny may be imposed upon the people by *arms*, is easily understood, because it is by arms, or by the terror of arms alone, that tyranny ever can be imposed at all; how is it to be imposed upon a senate, solely and entirely by *influence*, is not therefore quite so evident: a senate may be corrupt—granted; a senate may betray their trust—granted; a senate exposed to unlimited

country as the Volunteers of Ireland, who were on this occasion headed by persons of high character, either for integrity or ability. There was also a few local disturbances, such as from the very peculiar situation of the Irish peasantry, have taken place time out of mind, in Ireland, and of which the only object was the abolition or reduction of tythes; with these two exceptions, from the year 1782 to the year 1790, not only there appeared nothing like the spirit of outrage and hostility, which marks the present time, but there was never in this country, a period of more general public tranquillity.

Here then are plain positive facts upon record, which directly prove, that the present *melancholy and alarming times*, had not their origin either in the gross violations of our constitution, prior to the year 1782, or in the abuses of government subsequent to that year; which directly prove, that they commenced with the date of the French revolution, grew with the growth of that revolution, and gradually attained their present formidable aspect, as French principles and doctrines became prevalent among the people. Who will assert, that if the French revolution and its unfortunate consequence, the war with France had never taken place, we should, notwithstanding, have equally beheld the present *melancholy and alarming times*? or should any one arrogantly make the assertion, who would believe him?

Is it then fair, is it candid to state "that on the whole, the *cause* of the Irish distraction in 1797, "was the conduct of the servants of government," that is, in other words, of government itself? Is it fair or candid to charge the government of our country, and it only, with being the author of evils, which clearly, decidedly, and demonstratively owe their birth

coercion, to which he alludes; the author has deceived himself as much in supposing the latter a necessary consequence, and part of the former, as he did, when he left the French revolution and all its pernicious consequences, totally out of the question, in his view of the causes of the *Irish distraction* in 1797.

The author has justly remarked, that it is the business of the minister to observe the changes in the national spirit, as much as the changes of foreign combination—but surely it is *his* business, also, to observe the changes in the national spirit, who assumes the office of advising the minister. To those changes, as well as to every other consequence of the democratic spirit of the times, the author of the address appears totally, nay, wilfully blind; if he had no personal knowledge of the state of the country, in the disturbed parts of Ireland, or of the temper, spirit, and views of the disaffected portion of the people, residing in those parts; he ought to have obtained information from others, and not, in total darkness and ignorance, upon so important a subject; so important to the peace of the country; so important to the properties and lives of many of its inhabitants, to have indulged at random, in the most unwarrantable and inflammatory invective, regardless of the mischief it might create, or on whom that mischief might fall: had he gone into the disturbed districts, had he seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears, marked with his own observation, he would have learned the sad necessity, that with a loud and irresistible voice, called for the system of coercion which has been adopted. That system did not originate with government, nor was it rendered unavoidable from the ascribed abuses of government; it was not therefore a necessary part, or consequence of the alledged system of corruption, in this country any
more

mitted bribery, may make a corrupt use of their power ; —all, all granted ; yet, *how* is it a senate can be thus influenced ? Is it not because the government holds out personal and individual advantages to the members of that senate, which they prefer to the general advantage of the commonwealth ? *Influence* therefore, never can do more, than induce men to seek private advantage, at the expence of public good ; consequently *influence* alone never could induce them to permit a *ruthless and horrid tyranny, tremendous and intolerable*, to be imposed upon *themselves*, because what they seek is their own *advantage* ; and it is not easy to conceive the nature of a ruthless, horrid, tremendous and intolerable *advantage* !! No, the political corruption of a senate in the compleat possession of their powers, has a moral limit, beyond which, it is as absurd to suppose that any influence could induce them to pass, as it would be, that any *bribe* could tempt an individual to cut his own throat. This is one of those cases, where the obvious and inevitable *consequences* of the act, must as obviously and necessarily leave the party without any *inducement* whatever to commit it ; where there is no inducement, there can be no influence, as on the other hand, influence can do nothing more than induce ; it cannot compel, if it could, it would be no longer influence. To talk therefore, of a ruthless and horrid tyranny, tremendous and intolerable, that is imposed on a senate by *influence*, is a blunder in meaning, as well as a solecism in language.

The author is equally mistaken in his assertion that the system of coercion, was a necessary consequence, and part of the system of corrupt influence. Whatever the system of influence upon the senate may have been, the positive indubitable fact is, that it had not the smallest connection whatever with the system of coercion,

more than the latter system, can with truth be considered as the parent of the giant form, Democracy; which the author admits now walks over the face of Europe, trampling under its feet so many ancient governments, and making the remainder tremble at its approach. No, it was the *change in the national spirit*, which the author says it was the business of the minister to observe, but to which, he himself did not deign to pay the smallest attention; it was this that produced and rendered wholly unavoidable the system of coercion, the author so blindly reprobates.

Had he practised the precept he inculcates, had he watched the change, which soon after the revolution in France, began to take place in the national spirit, and has since, in the disturbed districts, ripened into the most daring and outrageous overt acts of insurrection and rebellion, he would have perceived that the ferment occasioned in the minds of men, by the new levelling and democratic principles, so insidiously propagated among them, had awakened and set to work, the old, but long dormant leaven, which produced the horrors of 1641; he would have perceived, that those levelling principles, and the wicked industry of the missionaries by whom they were inculcated, had also awakened and roused the spirit and practices of the rapparees who appeared towards the close of the last century. The resemblance which the insurgents of the present day, bear to the rapparees of 1690, is, in many points so striking, that the picture given of the latter, will serve for both; “ To crown
 “ all these miseries; (says the historian) the rapparees, who consisted of the lowest class among the
 “ Irish, now every where committed horrid depre-
 “ dations.—Little accustomed to observe the distinctions between friends and foes, they generally fell
 “ indiscriminately upon both, wherever plunder was
 “ to

“ to be gotten. They used to meet on dark nights, in
 “ unfrequented places, by appointment, to plan their
 “ mischiefs; appearing unarmed they yet could immedi-
 “ ately furnish themselves with weapon,, at a time when
 “ least expected, carrying the locks of their musquets in
 “ their pockets, and hiding the pieces themselves in the
 “ neighbouring ditches, they could assume them at plea-
 “ sure, and thus by the suddenness and uncommon me-
 “ thod of attack, would not only plunder the unarmed
 “ people, but would even sometimes venture to oppose
 “ whole bodies of regular forces.” They burned, pil-
 “ laged and destroyed whatever came in their way;
 “ mercy they neither gave nor expected, and their
 “ route was scarcely any otherwise to be traced, than
 “ by the fires they lighted up in the country, and the
 “ cries of the wretched inhabitants.”

Such were the rapparees of the last century, and such are, and have been for the last two or three years, the insurgents of the present times. Those who have a personal knowledge of the disturbed districts, must perceive the striking resemblance which the latter bear to the former; but it is a dreadful consideration, that, formidable as the modern insurgents are in their *resemblance* to the rapparees, they are infinitely more formidable in those respects where they *differ* from them. The rapparees, were little more than banditti, and their only object was plunder; they were indeed, perhaps, animated by that hatred, which a conquered people will long retain against those who had subdued and deprived them of their lands, and which the unhappy difference of religion, between the ruling powers and the vanquished, served to keep alive, but they were without plan, discipline, or organization, and wholly uncontaminated by the doctrine of the *new lights*.

Here

Here then is one of those important changes in the national spirit, which the author of the address remarks it is the business of the minister to observe, as much as the changes of foreign combination, but which he himself has thought proper totally to overlook.

To the spirit of plunder, to the hatred of the ruling part of the community, which the modern raparces may have inherited from their predecessors, there are now superadded all that political intoxication, and all that political enthusiasm, which French principles and French example, have so generally excited; giddy with that intoxication, fired with that enthusiasm, of which no religious sectaries, in the darkest night of bigotry, ever furnished stronger instances, the modern insurgents maintained their oath of secrecy, with a degree of perverse and obstinate faith, which on many occasions, the prospect of death itself could not shake. Plunder, with them, was not the object, but the means of obtaining their object; over which they threw that veil of secrecy, by them held so sacred, and to insure which, they had adopted and reduced to practice, the best digested plan, the strictest discipline, and the most compleat organization, under the auspices of a foreign enemy, who promised them the most efficacious support; who, as far as the elements permitted, kept their word; and with an armament, sufficient to work the utter destruction of the country, actually visited our coasts. See what a change of national spirit was here wrought in so short a time, when it is considered, that so lately as during the American war, in the year 1780 and 1781, although the real grievances of Ireland, were at that time, all unredressed, yet the nation were then prepared with the most patriotic ardour, and as it were with one voice, and one hand, to repel an invading enemy.

enemy.—Why was it so?—Because the French revolution had not then taken place, and French principles were then unknown, which have since unhinged the minds, and infatuated the imaginations of mankind.

But see the melancholy consequences at home of this change in the national spirit, so pregnant with mischief, yet so wholly unnoticed by the author of the address. Had he, during the space of the last two or three years, but particularly since the attempted invasion of the French; had he condescended to visit the disturbed districts, he would have beheld, not only almost every gentleman's, but every farmer's house in those parts, wearing the dismal appearance of a prison.—The windows of the lower stories of the former bricked up.—The windows of the latter, their houses being but of one story, defended by bars and grates of iron.—All communications between neighbours, residing in those gloomy mansions cut off, after the dusk of the evening.—The inhabitants passing sleepless nights, keeping watch by turns; in perpetual apprehension of a volley of musquetry being fired in at the windows of their bedchambers, or of their hall doors being forced open by sledges, or of their houses being set on fire, and themselves murdered.—Such was the situation of those who continued to reside in the country; but how many were forced from their homes? Compelled to take refuge in towns. Nor could any gentleman who remained in his country house, consider himself secure for a single night, unless he had a military guard. Had the author visited those districts, he would have seen this; but what is it, he would not have heard? Not a hundredth part of the robberies, not a tenth part of the murders, and other enormities perpetrated there during the last two years were ever publicly known.

But

But had he visited the scenes where those enormities were perpetrated, he would have learned that it was the common practice of the insurgents to steal in the dead of the night, with the utmost silence, to the house they intended to attack, and without the smallest warning given to the anxious inhabitants, in the first instance to fire in at the windows; then regardless of the deaths which the discharge of their musquetry might have inflicted, to call for arms, or for money, or for both. He would have learned, that where resistance was made by the inhabitants, in defence of their lives and property; either the house itself was set on fire, or where that could not be easily effected, the offices and haggard were burned; and the owner was afterwards liable to be shot at, on the public roads, for having dared to oppose the high and mighty will of the insurgents. Indeed the author might have known this without visiting those districts, since the practice of setting fire to houses had become so frequent, as to render it necessary for the legislature to pass a law, by which the Proprietor was in such cases enabled to recover damages of the county.

The author would farther have learned, that where the houses were not sufficiently strong to resist the attacks of the insurgents; not unfrequent have been the instances where the doors have been forced open with sledges, and the owners shot in their beds; or where having concealed themselves, the houses have been set on fire in order to force the miserable proprietors from their hiding places, who in endeavouring to escape from the flames, were shot at, in making the attempt;—Nay, it is not without example, that men and women have been laid upon a fire lit for the purpose, and held there, to make them confess where their arms, or their money were hid, and some have died in consequence of this atrocious cruelty;—It is
true

true these acts of barbarity were few, compared to the incalculable number of nightly robberies committed on the inhabitants in their own houses; but had they been still fewer than they were, and God knows they were sufficiently numerous, to excite horror and dismay throughout the adjacent country, to what a dreadful situation did they not reduce, the unhappy persons who were liable to become the objects of such barbarities; living, or rather suffering under the perpetual and terrible apprehension, that each night they lay down to rest, it might be their turn, to undergo the same fate.

As to the innumerable robberies committed by the insurgents, they were not confined to any particular description of men, but all who had arms or money were equally attacked. The Roman Catholic gentleman, and Roman Catholic farmer, were as much exposed to them as the Protestant gentleman and Protestant farmer; religion did not form the smallest ingredient, in the spirit which actuated these destroyers of the public happiness of society, and private peace of individuals; the author of the address has very properly styled it "a political, not a predatory spirit;" for as was before observed, the plunder of arms and of money, was not the object to which they at present looked, but only the means of obtaining in future, that to which they were looking forward. When however he proceeds to call it a "*spirit of political reformation*," one cannot but lament his blindness. —What—a spirit which owes its birth, to the example and principles of France, and to the doctrines of Paine, justifying that example, maintaining those principles, and with equal art and malignancy, endeavouring to excite in the reader, contempt and hatred for the constitution of these kingdoms; a spirit which since the commencement of the war, has been nurtured

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tured and fed, by treasonable communications with France, and emboldened by the promised assistance of the armies of France; a spirit which has chiefly seized those who are too ignorant to understand the constitution, they are stimulated to destroy, and too far removed from the effects of its abuses, real or supposed, to feel them in their own persons; a spirit which has even penetrated among those, who can have no personal interest in political reformation, but may have a most material personal interest in the preservation of the present constituted authorities; which, though it can scarce be mentioned without grief and shame, has even pervaded the bulwark of these countries, and their former pride---the British navy ---and the contagion of which has reached a part of the army itself *, at the very time that both services, from an increase of pay and of other advantages, it might have been hoped, were more than ever, calculated to give satisfaction to those employed in them; and, lastly, what indeed is an object of less public importance, but of equal consequence to individuals; a spirit that has found its way within the very walls of our houses, and has, in too many instances, tempted and seduced the fidelity of our domestics, destroying all confidence in our home, or trust in those, whose duty it should be to assist in defending us. Surely those who have contemplated the effects of this spirit in other countries, and have bestowed one thought upon its effects in our own, may indeed agree with the author of the address, that it is a *political* spirit; but it is the ruthless spirit of democracy, the insatiable spirit of political destruction to every government

* One of the marines lately shot at Portsmouth for mutiny, confessed at the place of execution, that he had been prompted to commit the crime for which he suffered, by reading some of Paine's works.

not purely democratic; they will perceive this spirit accompanied by a dark, intolerant, and fierce enthusiasm, which, quitting its ancient alliance with religious zeal, now lends to political zeal, all the heat and all the violence, with which fanaticism ever armed the proselyte of a new, or the sectary of an ancient faith.

To annex to such a spirit as this, the gentle denomination of *a spirit of political reform*, or to assert, as the author of the address has asserted that a spirit which has pervaded Europe and America, which both in Great Britain and in this country, has reached classes of men, where last and least, it could have been expected, "*was chiefly nourished and propagated by the abuses of the IRISH government*," surely this is more than blindness---it is almost insanity.

"It is the very error of the moon;

"She comes more near the earth than she was wont,

"And makes men mad."

But to return to the melancholy view of the disturbed districts---The author of the address says---"the laws did, in my judgment, afford the crown sufficient power to administer the country;" but he says so, because on the subject of the disturbances which prevailed here, his judgment was wholly uninformed: for two or three years successively, the experiment was tried and failed; and ended, in the intimidation of jurymen, by threats, and more than threats, by houghing their cattle, destroying their crops, and burning their haggards; it ended in the assassination of witnesses, and the murder of magistrates; often accompanied by circumstances of the utmost barbarity; jurymen resident in the country were afraid even upon the clearest evidence, to find a culprit guilty; the witness who appeared against him was certain of being put to death, unless he sought

the very agreeable protection of a prison, or fled the country; and the magistrates, who merely from being magistrates, were obnoxious to the insurgents, and the other gentlemen of the district had frequently conspiracies formed against them, to which some of them fell a sacrifice, and from which many had the narrowest escape. Such was the ferocious nature of the spirit that had gone abroad, that it seemed to dissolve all the obligations of duty, and all the ties of gratitude; in these conspiracies some domestic was generally a party, and not unfrequently one in whom his master placed the utmost confidence, who had been, perhaps, bred under him from a child, and whom he had trusted with arms, to guard his house, and protect the lives of his family. There have been instances where these deluded and corrupted servants, have on the night of a preconcerted attack, secretly drawn the charges out of their masters fire arms; in other cases, they have taken out the flints, and have put wooden imitations of them in their room, in order to leave their masters defenceless in the moment of danger.— Yet, this we are told is “*the spirit of political Reform!*”—This is the spirit for which the existing laws were sufficiently strong, and which could be put down by the ordinary course of justice!

What can be more idly absurd, than to suppose, that when half, at least, of the inhabitants of a country, and that the most youthful and vigorous part of them, a large portion of these armed, and all inspired with a zeal for the cause in which they have embarked, with an enthusiasm that made them fearless of death, and took from the gallows all its terrors and all its shame, who had declared open war against the laws of their country, and against the propertied part of the community, to whom conspiracies, conflagrations, assassinations, and deliberate murders were familiar;

what,

what, in the name of common sense, can be so absurd as to imagine, that such men, actuated by such principles, were to be kept in order by the ordinary trial by jury; where jurymen dared not convict, and where witnesses dared not give evidence? When they declared war against the laws of their country, did they not voluntarily renounce the *benefit* of those laws? when they intimidated jurymen, houghed their cattle, and set fire to their haggards, when they murdered witnesses, did they not themselves renounce the trial by jury, by rendering it utterly impracticable? When they murdered the civil magistrates of the country, did they not themselves establish the necessity of employing military force *alone*? that is, of employing persons, who not being residents, nor having property in the country, were in no respect vulnerable to the attacks of these men; against whom, the resident magistrate could not always be upon his guard, even for the security of his life; and whose house and property were necessarily exposed to destruction. Yet, these are the men, in speaking of whom, the author of the address says, “*sad experiment! to blood the magistracy with the poor man’s liberty, and employ the rich, like a pack of government blood-hounds, to hunt down the poor!*” This is the crime with which he charges government—Gracious God!—into what deplorable errors, may not that man be led, whose judgment is blinded by his passions! Upon this extraordinary sentence, as it fell from his pen, humanity and justice might, in sorrow for the author, have dropped a tear. The melancholy, the lamentable situation of the inhabitants of the disturbed districts, not of the gentlemen merely, not of the rich only, but also of the comparatively poor, industrious, and unoffending farmers, has been already described, without the smallest exaggeration; all who possessed property

property in whatever degree, from the highest to the lowest, were equally exposed to, and had equal reason to apprehend, the depredations, the nightly attacks, and the murderous arms of the insurgents.--- And these persons thus sinned against; thus robbed; their properties thus destroyed; the lives of many of them thus taken away; are under the ridiculous, inapplicable and general denomination, of *the rich*, compared to a pack of blood-hounds, employed by the government to hunt down the poor!---They are thus compared, because, finding it was wholly out of the power of the civil magistrates, to enforce the laws, which could only be done at the peril of their lives, and the lives of some were sacrificed in making the attempt; finding it totally and utterly impossible that the ordinary course of justice could meet the terrible mischiefs which for near three years had assailed and surrounded them, they at length applied to government for that protection from the military power, which the civil power and existing laws could no longer afford them.---To hunt down the poor!---What poor?---The *poor* insurgents,---the *poor* midnight assailants of the houses of the peaceable inhabitants,---the *poor* men who set fire to those houses, or to the haggards belonging to them;---the *poor* men who used to discharge volleys of musquetry through the windows of a house, where, surrounded perhaps by his wife and children, the unoffending owner was sitting quietly by his fire side.---The *poor* men who forced into the houses of magistrates and murdered them;---the *poor* men who way-laid witnesses on the high roads, and murdered them, or who dragged them in the dead of the night out of their beds, tied them to a tree and shot them.---These *poor men*, have most wonderfully excited the author's pity---it should seem as if he commiserated their crimes, and reserved his indignation

indignation for their punishment; he forgets the murdered magistrates, and their widows and orphans—the murdered witnesses, and their widows and orphans—the many other murdered individuals, who left widows and orphans to deplore their loss—no commiseration appears to be due to them; it is all exhausted upon the authors of their calamities, when, at length overtaken by justice, they suffer in their turn, what they had before inflicted on others.

“The system of coercion,” therefore, which the author describes as “a part of the system of corruption,” was so far from originating with government, that it proceeded altogether from the loud and reiterated calls, of the peaceable and well-affected, but terrified inhabitants of the disturbed districts. If any blame in this respect can attach upon government, it was owing to their very great reluctance to adopt, (however necessary the measure), that system of coercion, until the mischief could no longer be borne, instead of meeting it at the beginning.

The sending on board a tender some of the author’s *poor men* already described—“the grey coated man, and the green man,” poor innocents! whom he, with so much propriety, compares to the bishops sent to the tower by James II. and to Mr. Hampden, and the four other innocent persons arraigned by Charles I. the sending of these men, at an earlier period, on board a tender, was not only a measure strictly justifiable by the pressing urgency of the times, (whatever *they* may think of it, who, living in quiet parts of the kingdom, in perfect security *themselves*, bear the evils to which *others* are exposed, with the most legal and constitutional spirit), but was a measure for which he who had the spirit and sagacity to adopt it, deserved, and received the thanks of every well-affected inhabitant of the districts that were by this means freed from the alarms which
those

those *innocent* men had excited, and would have continued to excite, in their respective neighbourhoods. The only error was, that this measure was not then followed up, by adopting at that time the system, which government has since been compelled to pursue, which would have crushed the mischief in the bud, instead of suffering it to expand itself so widely as it afterwards did.

It may now be seen with how much justice, government has been charged with the system of coercion, as a crime, and with how much justice, “*the rich,*” that is to say, all the well-affected and well-disposed inhabitants possessed of any property in the disturbed districts, have deserved to be stigmatized, by being compared to a pack of government bloodhounds, employed to hunt down the poor.

The proclamation issued by government on the 17th of May last, is itself a flat contradiction to this most unfounded charge; it holds out pardon and protection to all the poor, who, though guilty of having taken, or administered unlawful oaths, had not actually committed murder, or robbery, or had not burned houses, or houghed cattle. The system of coercion, therefore, instead of hunting down the poor, was calculated for *their* protection, as much as for that, of all persons who had any property; it not only protected the innocent poor, but even those who had been in a certain degree criminal, rescuing them from that tyranny which had rendered them so, by compelling them to take unlawful oaths, and thus apparently to join in the conspiracy; for the reign of Robespierre in France, was not more the reign of terror, than that of the leaders and instigators of the insurgents; and to do justice, it must be owned, that of the thousands upon thousands, who had been seduced or terrified from their allegiance, a very great portion
of

of them would gladly have returned to it, if the power of government to protect them, had been sufficient to put down the power which had intimidated them ; and for this purpose, nothing short of the steps which were pursued by government would have been effectual.

To follow the author through the remainder of this address with any degree of closeness, would lead to a length, which the limits prescribed to this publication forbid ; a few more points, however, shall be discussed, as concisely as possible.

The influence of the British Cabinet, which he styles its legislative usurpation, is considered by him as one of the principal causes of the present disturbances. Without doubt there is something defective in the administration of the executive power in this country, and this is obviously and naturally to be accounted for. At the settlement of the constitution in 1782, a great change took place, by the establishment of the total independence of the Irish legislature, when, to use the author's words, Ireland ceased to be a province, and became a nation ; but no change whatever at that time took place, with respect to the administration of the executive power, *that* continued precisely the same as when Ireland was a province, and its Parliament no more than a provincial assembly ; it therefore does not now correspond with the change then made in the legislature. It would be, perhaps, better if the Lord Lieutenant, and his minister the Irish secretary of state, residing here, governed more, and the British cabinet interfered less, in the interior concerns of the country. This, however, is a subject that deserves, and may call for future discussion, at some other period. But when the author, true to his object, that of criminating the existing government ; when he states, " we thought no Irishman—we were sure no
" honest Irishman would ever be in heart with govern-
" ment

“ ment, so long as the Parliament of this country
 “ shall be influenced by the cabinet of England, and
 “ were convinced that the People would not be the
 “ more *reconciled* to a *foreign yoke*, because *re-imposed*
 “ by their own countrymen;” and again, “ we could
 “ not seriously believe, that the People of Ireland
 “ were ready to resist the legislative usurpation of the
 “ British parliament, in whose station the greatness of
 “ the tyrant would have qualified the condition of the
 “ slave; and that the same People were now ready to
 “ prostrate themselves to the legislative usurpation of
 “ another body—a British cabinet—a humiliated and
 “ a tame tyrant.” When he states this, a person at
 all acquainted with the Parliamentary transactions of
 this country, as well prior as subsequent to the year
 1782, when her legislative independency was asserted
 and acknowledged—cannot well comprehend what
 the author means. From what has been now quoted,
 would not one imagine that the influence of the ca-
 binet of England, upon the Parliament of this coun-
 try, was of very recent date; that it was not known
 till *after* the year 1782; that it had *then* succeeded to
 the power before usurped, but at that time abdicated,
 by the British parliament; and that it had *re-imposed*
 the foreign yoke, to which Ireland had so long sub-
 mitted, and from which she had so lately escaped?

Now the fact is, that prior to the year 1782, the
 influence of the British cabinet upon the Irish parlia-
 ment was, pretty nearly, what it has been since. It
 prevailed in Lord Townshend's administration; in
 Lord Harcourt's; in Lord Buckinghamshire's; in Lord
 Carlisle's:—and no man will dispute with the author,
 that since the year 1782, there has not been a single
 period, in which the influence of the cabinet of Eng-
 land did not prevail, more or less, with the parliament
 of Ireland—Whether no honest Irishman can ever be
 in

in heart with government, so long as this influence subsists, is a point that need not be discussed here: but thus much is certain: that at different periods *since* the year 1782, some very honest Irishmen, notwithstanding the existence of this influence, have been with their whole hearts and souls, the warm and zealous friends and supporters of the existing administration.

Now, in the name of common sense, what is this influence of the cabinet of England? Is it any thing more than the influence of the *Irish crown*, acting through the medium of the English cabinet?—That it would be better, for very obvious reasons, if the necessary influence of the Irish crown, did not act, quite so much, through the medium of an entirely English cabinet—and something more through the medium of the Irish government resident here—is admitted; and if in the year 1782, when all the great constitutional claims of Ireland were supposed to have been fully stated—and, to judge from the addresses which then passed both houses of parliament, finally settled; if this point was then overlooked, and no precautions taken on the subject;—is the neglect of the Irish parliament, at that period, to be made the crime of the administration of the present day? But where, however, are the *instances*, by which it will appear “that the British cabinet *have* re-imposed the “foreign yoke,” (formerly forced upon the People of Ireland by the British parliament,) and have so re-imposed it, “by means of their own countrymen,” the Irish parliament? It is not to be believed, says the author, that the People of Ireland were ready to resist the usurpation of the British parliament, and were now ready to prostrate themselves to the legislative usurpation of a British cabinet: certainly not; we may agree with the author, that it is not to be believed; and for that very reason he was bound to produce
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some instances, wherein any of those abominable and tyrannical restraints and restrictions formerly binding Ireland in the chains of the British Parliament, have been *re-imposed*, upon the people of this country, by the legislative usurpation of the British cabinet. But the author does no such thing. After bringing these grave and criminal charges against government in general terms; he very cavalierly gets over the difficulty of *proof*—by simply stating;—"We need not repeat the particulars:"—And government is thus charged with a crime, of which he does not deign to bring a single proof, the crime of subverting the Parliamentary constitution, by the influence of the British cabinet;—in order to attribute to government, and to government alone, the discontents and disturbances of the present times.

The author proceeds to state; "It appeared to us, that the discontent and disturbance so created;"—that is, by the unconstitutional influence of the British cabinet, "was greatly increased by another cause; the treatment of his majesty's catholic subjects."

Coupling here the unconstitutional influence of the British cabinet, with the treatment of the Roman Catholics, as being alike causes of the present discontent, was certainly an unfortunate oversight in the author.

What is the fact?—In 1793 the Roman Catholics presented a Petition to the Irish legislature, for a redress of grievances.—It is well known with how little respect that petition was treated, and how very small the minority was, that supported it.—From the conduct and temper of the House of Commons on that occasion, there was every reason to conclude that if left to themselves, they would never have acceded to the prayer of that petition.—What did the Roman Catholics? they appealed from the Irish legislature,
to

to the British cabinet:—And what was the consequence?—The British cabinet did certainly interfere in *favour* of the Roman Catholics;—but they interfered, not to re-impose restraints and restrictions; not to re-impose a foreign yoke, but to remove a domestic one.—Through the interference, and influence of the British cabinet, the same House of Commons, which in 1793 had rejected the Roman Catholic petition, with heat, anger and contempt, granted to the Roman Catholics in 1794, much more than appeared to be required by the petition they had thus rejected. Now that the treatment the Roman Catholics experienced from the House of Commons in 1793, not only in rejecting, but in the mode of rejecting their petition, should have excited great discontent among them, is easily understood;—but that the discontent and disturbance created by the unconstitutional influence of the British cabinet, was greatly increased by the treatment of the Roman Catholics, who had appealed to that cabinet, and the influence of which, had obtained for them, from the House of Commons, even more than they had asked;—that the discontent produced by the *refusal* of the Irish Commons, should have been *increased* by the *compliance* of the English cabinet, obtained through the solicitations of the Roman Catholics themselves;—this is an inconsistency, not easily reconciled to common sense.

Next as to borough parliaments, another principal cause, according to the author, of the present disturbances.

On this subject who must not smile, at the following rhapsody of invective in which the author has indulged himself?—Speaking of boroughs, the author says:—“ Examination into the subject had shewn that
“ the greater part of the Irish boroughs were crea-
“ tions

so much more liable to have their understanding vitiated by their passions, than when reviewing the events of former days?—When the writer betrays in this case, as in the other, the same heat of temper, indulges in the same virulence of invective, and evinces the same disposition to view only one, and that the darkest side of every occurrence, have we not then reason to suspect a similar distortion of existing facts?

The author says, that the greater part of the Irish boroughs, were creations by the House of Stuart, for the avowed purpose of *modelling and subverting the Parliamentary constitution of Ireland.*—

Now what is the Historical fact? Previous to the reign of James I. Ireland never was in possession of a Parliamentary constitution—to four fifths of the kingdom, the very idea of a Parliament was utterly unknown.—The descendants of the English colony that first settled, during the reign of Henry II. in a part of Leinster, indeed had a colonial assembly known by the name of the Parliament of the Pale, which was so much contemned by the members themselves, that it was considered by some of them as a high privilege upon which they much insisted, that they should *not* be summoned to attend this colonial assembly. In the province of Ulster there was scarcely the trace of a Parliament until the eleventh year of James I. nor in Connaught until the 27th Eliz. seventeen years only before the accession of James; prior to that period, no county members had been returned for that Province, and then only once in the space of 42 years 'till the eleventh of James. There were about half a dozen scattered colonies of the English in the sea-port towns of Munster, who occasionally returned members, before the twenty-seventh of Elizabeth;—but such was the state of the country, that these could seldom find their way to the Pale parliament

“ tions by the House of Stuart for the *avowed purpose*
 “ of *modelling and subverting the Parliamentary consti-*
 “ *tution of Ireland:—*

“ That these (i. e. boroughs) were understated,
 “ when called abuses in the constitution—that they
 “ were *gross and monstrous violations, recent and wicked*
 “ *innovations, and the fatal usurpations on the consti-*
 “ *tution by kings, whose family lost the throne for*
 “ crimes less deadly to freedom;—and who, in their
 “ Star-Chamber—in their court of High Commission
 “ —in their ship money—or in their dispensing power
 “ —did not commit an act, so *diabolical in intention,*
 “ *so mortal in principle, or so radically subversive of the*
 “ *fundamental rights of the realm, as—the fabrication*
 “ of boroughs.”—

The mode of reasoning adopted by the author, in the above quoted passages, ascertains, with the utmost precision, the degree of weight, which all his other charges against government deserve to obtain; and were a sober, thinking, and well informed man, to read those passages alone, and no other part of the address, he might decidedly pronounce upon the whole of it, and form the truest estimate of the impartiality and justness of thinking, to be expected from the author, upon any other subject contained in his address.

When a writer betrays so much heat of temper, that his judgment is evidently blinded to historical truths, which are matters of record; and his understanding, warped by that heat, is led, in the bitterest terms that invective can supply, to distort even the facts recorded in the annals of ancient times;—what opinion can be entertained of his judgment, what deference paid to his censures, upon the living transactions of his own times—respecting which, all men, but particularly actors in the scenes they describe, are
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dom, *fat*, in consequence of the creation of those corporations, in the eleventh year of James I.

Now in the name of common sense, how can the author charge James with having created boroughs for the avowed purpose of *modelling* and *subverting* the Parliamentary constitution of Ireland? that is, of modelling and subverting, what neither had, nor ever had had, any existence, until the creation of those very boroughs!

To say, therefore, that by this act of James, he was able to subvert, what never had existence, is a species of logic, not very easily understood by a common understanding. The fact is, that James I. instead of being the subverter of the Parliamentary constitution of Ireland—was the founder of that constitution. The author will not contend, that the colonial assembly of the Pale, confined to a few counties of only one province in the kingdom, was the Parliamentary constitution of Ireland!—an assembly depending upon England for its existence, and the government of the colony maintained at the expence of England. In what low repute that assembly was held, is evident, from the members themselves being tenacious of the privilege, of *not* being summoned to attend it. What indeed was the English House of Commons itself, at that period? when Elizabeth was in the habit of reproof in the harshest terms, any of the members who presumed to meddle with State affairs, and when not only she, but after her James, frequently committed such members to the Tower, as happened to utter any thing in Parliament, that was displeasing to the royal ear. If such was the humble and degraded state, even of the English House of Commons, at that period; what must have been that of so wretched a shadow, so paltry an imitation of it, as the colonial assembly of the Pale, confined to a

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ment—the distance of such borough towns from Dublin and Drogheda, where Parliaments were most commonly held, and the *dangerous and perilous passage by the way*, by the occasion of *the King's rebels*, are circumstances frequently mentioned in the statutes of Henry VIII.—such was the *ancient* parliamentary constitution, which James I, is charged with subverting.

In the above mentioned three Provinces, not only the inhabitants, the native Irish, but a large portion of the descendants of the first English settlers were 'till the reign of James, governed by the ancient laws and customs of Ireland;—in consequence of this, and of their rivetted attachment to the Roman Catholic religion,—during the whole reign of Elizabeth, this country was one continued scene of insurrection and rebellion; these were at length quelled by lord Mountjoy early in the reign of James I. and then it was that James, having sent over several colonies of English and Scotch, and settled them in various parts of the kingdom, first substituted the English law, for the old Irish customs, which he then abolished. The colonists sent over in this manner, were all Protestants; whereas the greater portion of the descendants of the English colonists, settled in a part of Leinster, had adhered to the Roman Catholic persuasion; when James, therefore, converted the *colonial assembly* of the Pale, hitherto confined to these ancient colonists, who professed obedience to the English laws and crown into a *Parliament for the whole kingdom of Ireland*, in order to include his new Protestant colonists, and to give the Protestant interest a predominant influence in that Parliament, he erected forty corporations, with the privilege of sending representatives to it; and the *first Parliament* of Ireland that ever met, or that was ever known, as the *Parliament of the kingdom*,

part of Leinster, and having the remainder of the kingdom in avowed hostility to the English colony, to which it belonged? No, it is a fact, as clearly and as decidedly ascertained, as any historical fact can be, that when James I. undertook the settlement of Ireland, he did not find the *Irish nation* possessed of any Parliamentary constitution whatever; consequently the boroughs he created for the purpose of introducing that constitution among them, were *coeval* with it:—James, therefore, finding Ireland, *as a kingdom*, totally destitute of a Parliamentary constitution, it is fair to ask the author, in what manner that sovereign *could* have introduced it? Has the author totally forgot the origin, rise, and progress of the English House of Commons? Did it not owe its commencement to the corporations created, and charters granted, by the crown, conveying the privilege of sending representatives to Parliament? The knights of the shire, who, for the first time, made their appearance in the Parliament called by the Earl of Leicester, in the reign of Henry III. were the representatives of the petty barons, and the minor feudal proprietors of lands; but certainly the introduction of the representatives of the People into Parliament, had no other origin than that now stated. Was it not, then, natural for James, to make the Parliamentary constitution of England his model for that of Ireland; and consequently to create corporations and grant charters, in order to convey the privilege of choosing representatives? We certainly are not to try the practice of the year 1613, by the principles of the year 1797, and at that period was it possible for James, by any other mode, to give to Ireland a Parliamentary constitution? To say, then, that those boroughs, erected by James in 1613, which were *coeval* with the Parliamentary constitution of Ireland, “were gross and monstrous
“ *violations*;

“ *violations—recent and wicked innovations,*”—or to call them—“ *fatal usurpations on the constitution,*” which they were the means of introducing, and the only means by which it could have been introduced at all;—this is certainly another specimen of that species of logic, which is not very easily understood by a common understanding.

But when, in the bitterness of his wrath, the author proceeds to say, that the kings of the house of Stuart,—“ in their Star-Chamber tyranny—in their Court of High Commission—in their ship-money—or in their dispensing power, did not commit an act so diabolical in intention, so mortal in principle, or so radically subversive of the fundamental rights of the realm, as”—what?—something very dreadful, no doubt!—by no means; it is nothing more than simply the creation of boroughs, with the chartered privilege of sending representatives to Parliament!—a creation to which the English House of Commons owed its origin, and to which all historians, and all writers on the constitution, have unanimously attributed the first dawn of civil liberty that appeared in these realms—this is, indeed, a species of logic, that passeth all understanding.

“ But,” says the author, “ the *birth* of the borough inundation was the *destruction of liberty and property*;—that James I. the king who made that inundation, *by that means* destroyed the titles of his Irish subjects to their lands, without the least ceremony; the robbery of his liberty was immediately *followed* by the robbery of his property.” The author must have been very unfortunate in the books he has consulted—he must have been imposed upon by fabulous legends, which the *history* of those times directly contradicts.—*The BIRTH of the borough inundation—the destruction of liberty and property!* The

fact is, that the destruction of property, to which the author alludes, was produced by the rebellion which subsisted in Ireland, during the reign of Elizabeth, and in the beginning of the reign of James; when nearly the whole of the province of Ulster was, for treason, forfeited to the crown; and the forfeited lands were divided, and tenanted by persons, brought over from England and Scotland.

Now, that the title of James's Irish subjects to their lands was not "destroyed *by means* of the borough "inundation," or that "the robbery of their liberty," ascribed by the author to this inundation, "was not "followed by the robbery of their property," appears pretty plainly from this tolerably conclusive reason:—This forfeiture *took place*, and the title of such of James's Irish subjects to their lands, as had shared in the rebellion, was *destroyed—before* the creation of those boroughs!

The author, however, proceeds in the same strain: "How could it happen (says the historian) that the "king could do all this with so small an army—seize "the properties of the subject, and transport the inhabitants? I (says the author) will presume to conjecture:" then winding up his indignation to the highest pitch, and in a paroxysm of outrageous eloquence—"The king," says he, "had another instrument, more subtle and more pliable than the "sword, and against the liberty of the subject more "cold and deadly—a court instrument, that murders "freedom without the mark of blood—palls itself in "the covering of the constitution; and in her own "colours, and in her name, plants the dagger!—a "borough Parliament." The Lord help this poor borough Parliament, if it was really guilty of all those deadly sins—but then it certainly must have been, when it was asleep; (as indeed the whole passage is
not

not altogether unlike the description of a dream) for be it known, this same terrible borough Parliament was born on the 16th May, 1613, and was dissolved, otherwise put to sleep, on the 24th October, 1615—having been permitted to live, or keep awake, only *one year and five months*, and to sit only a part of that very short space of time; it was then suffered by James, and by his son Charles I. to continue in the most profound sleep, for—*eighteen years*. Well it certainly was, for the good People of Ireland at that period, that James I. never himself found out, what the author has since discovered, that this same borough Parliament was the finest instrument in the hands of a king, that even James, with his high notions of regal authority, could possibly have desired!—an instrument that supplied the place of an army, without the expence of one; that was more subtle, and more pliable than the sword; more cold and deadly against the liberty of the subject; that could murder freedom without fear of detection, as it left no mark of blood; and, indeed, it is impossible to say what it could *not* do, although its various powers are not very distinctly seen, in the remainder of the author's description of them.

But the extraordinary circumstance is, that James I. who loved power as much as any monarch that ever wore a crown, should have entirely overlooked all this; and have suffered a borough Parliament, capable of being converted into so notable an instrument of that *absolute* power, for which he had the most decided predilection; that he should have suffered it to exist only for so very *short* a time, and then *never again* to have had recourse to it, during the remainder of his reign!

Upon the whole, therefore, this *inundation of boroughs*, was the most extraordinary political phenomenon

menon, that was ever yet seen, heard, or thought of. *Before* it was *born**, it had contrived to destroy the liberty and property of James's Irish subjects.---It was no sooner born, than it subverted a constitution, that was not, *at the time*, in existence; and when it went to sleep, it *continued* to murder freedom, without drawing blood---and to plant the dagger in the name of that constitution, it had already subverted, in so very extraordinary a manner!!

Such is the specimen that has been selected of the author's justness, and accuracy of reasoning, upon historical facts, because it will serve to put his readers upon their guard against his mode of reasoning upon the living facts of the present time. In both cases he betrays an equal blindness to the *real* causes of political evils; and a most persevering determination to attribute them to whatever happens to have fallen under his own immediate displeasure.

Thus, for instance, ask a plain man, who knows any thing of the history of Ireland---how it happened that, at the beginning of the last century, almost the whole of the province of Ulster was forfeited to the crown; he will tell you it was owing to the *rebellion* which took place in the reign of Elizabeth, and continued to the beginning of that of James I.---but the author of the address tells you, that it was owing to ---a *borough Parliament*!---Ask the same man, what produced the almost total revolution of property in Ireland, about the middle of the last century; and he will tell you, that it was owing to the rebellion of 1641, which desolated the country for near seventeen years; and to the civil wars which, during that period, raged in England. But the author of the address says, it was owing to---a *borough Parliament*!

* The author of the address says---the *birth* of that inundation.

In the same manner, ask a cool dispassionate man, what is the chief source of that discontented and perturbed spirit, which, for the last three or four years, has pervaded a large portion of the lower orders of the inhabitants of this country, or of that dissatisfaction, which appears to prevail, more or less, among other descriptions of men; and he will answer---
 “ You must not confound the dissatisfaction of which
 “ you speak, as prevailing among other descriptions
 “ of men, with that spirit of insurrection, which pervades so large a portion of the lower classes of the
 “ people.” The principal, if not the only source of the latter spirit, beyond controversy arises from the insidious and abominable industry, with which French principles have been propagated among them, to poison their minds, insatuate their imaginations, fill them with hopes of some unknown good they were to derive from the overthrow of the government, and with the most sanguine expectations of having those hopes realized, by means of the assistance of the armies of that nation, whose principles they have adopted, and whose arms have subdued Europe. These constitute infinitely the most numerous and most formidable body of the discontented; and the spirit by which they are actuated, may be said, with the strictest truth, to have grown out of the French Revolution, and out of all its pernicious effects, upon the minds of the People of this country, in common with the People of every country, where French principles have gained admittance. The dissatisfaction that prevails among the smaller, though better, and more enlightened description of men, may, indeed, in part be attributed, to the abuses, (and what human institution is free from them?) that have, in course of time, crept into the constitution; for these were complained of, by that description of persons, long before the
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the wonderful change in France had ever been thought of :---still, however, even among those persons, the French revolution contributed to sharpen the ill humours before produced by the abuses of government, to a degree of acrimony, that was but ill suited to that cool and dispassionate temper, without which no really salutary reform can be well effected. Nor was it possible for them entirely to escape the contagion of that, (for our mixt constitution) certainly *too* democratic a spirit, taught by the factious professors of the *new lights*, which, at such a juncture, might disqualify, otherwise, moderate men, from becoming reformers of the state---and render it dangerous, while humours so highly acrimonious, and a spirit so highly democratic, prevailed, even to make a beginning of the salutary work of reformation, which, under other circumstances, might certainly have been undertaken, not only with safety, but with very essential advantage; and the more particularly dangerous, as the other much more numerous and more formidable body of the discontented, did not look for the reform, but for the destruction of the constitution.

Such, it is apprehended, would be the answer of a reflecting, dispassionate man, to the Query that has been put---but let the Querist consult the author of the address; and he will find that, in the author's opinion, the French revolution, and its extensive and tremendous consequences, which stare every *other* man in the face, have little or nothing to do with the question. No---according to him, the distraction of the present melancholy and alarming times; that spirit of insurrection, by which the great body of the discontented, have been actuated to aim at the total overthrow of the government; those highly acrimonious humours, and that infinitely too democratic a spirit, which prevail among the smaller body of the dissatisfied,

dissatisfied; are all, all owing to---a borough Parliament---the legislative usurpation of the English cabinet---and the treatment of the Roman Catholics!!

To conclude.---Far be it from the writer of these pages, to censure indiscriminately, and in the gross, whatever is contained in the address, that has been the subject of the preceding observations.

This would be to treat the author, as he himself has treated the government of the country: a mode of proceeding which it is the object of those observations to expose, and to condemn;---when stripped of the exaggeration, with which they have been so loaded by the author, as to be scarcely distinguishable; there may then be discovered some truths in his address, which certainly deserve attention.

As to what the author styles, the *unconstitutional* influence of the English cabinet;---as to the withholding from the Roman Catholic, what yet remains to be granted to him; and as to the present state of Representation in the House of Commons; he must be a very ignorant, or a very dishonest man, who should *deny* that these three causes, have produced any sort of discontent among different classes of men in this country. The fact, which every man of information and integrity must admit, is;---that among very respectable classes of men, they have produced much discontent; which, as it is not unfounded, cannot with justice be condemned.---But he also must be wilfully blind to the real state of the kingdom, and to the various views of its various inhabitants, who should so grossly mistake the nature of the discontent thus produced, as to attribute to the same causes, those other, at once factious, and fictitious discontents, which prevail among a very different description of people, and which, through the equally wicked,

wicked and indefatigable industry, of the enemies of their country, and of its constitution, have engendered those treasonable disturbances, that have shaken the state, and that extensive conspiracy, which has been detected, and, for the present, dispelled. With regard, then, to the first point; not, as it is styled by the author, the *unconstitutional influence*, or the *legislative usurpation*, but the *too preponderating influence* of the British cabinet--this subject has been already touched upon: it may, however, be farther observed, that as long as the two kingdoms are connected (and God forbid they should be otherwise), and as long as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is a branch of that cabinet, *some* influence it must, and ought to have--and the question only goes to the *degree*. And, even as the case now stands, it is fair to remark, that it is a circumstance, more mortifying and humiliating to the higher ranks of society, and to the spirit and feelings of proper national pride, in the official men, forming the Irish branches of the administration of this country, than it has *hitherto* proved injurious to the community at large. As to the mass of the People, by them it is neither seen, nor felt, nor known, in any shape whatever; and must, therefore, be totally struck out of the author's catalogue, of the causes of the present disturbances.

With respect to the second point, which the author of the address styles, "the treatment of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects," and which he states to be a cause that had greatly increased the existing disturbances;---why should he continue to insult common sense, by calling the little that remains to be done for them, the *Emancipation* of the Catholics? Surely this expression has *now* no meaning; and therefore it is absurd to employ it;---or it is worse than absurd; for it tends to mislead the ignorant among them,

them, into a most unjustifiable and unwarrantable belief; that they are *still enslaved*. The great body of the lower order of the Roman Catholics--the smaller, though still numerous body, of the middle order of Roman Catholics---are, in every particular, without a single exception, precisely on a footing of the most perfect *equality*, in all points whatever, both of civil and of political liberty, with the *same classes* of their Protestant fellow-subjects. From those two classes of Roman Catholics, who, were the numbers of the whole of the Roman Catholic community divided into five hundred equal parts, would certainly constitute four hundred and ninety-nine of those parts ---from them what has been withheld? Nothing!---Under such circumstances, then, to talk of the *Emancipation* of the *Catholics*!—Great God—whither are fairness, candour, and reason fled!!

From one *five hundredth part* of the Catholic community, (perhaps, indeed, not even that) some things have certainly been withheld; from the Roman Catholic nobleman, from the Roman Catholic gentleman—*eligibility* to hold certain great offices of state, or a seat in the legislature—has been withheld. That the highest class of the Roman Catholic community should have a mark (certainly not of honourable distinction) put upon them, which has not been put upon the middle and lower orders of the same community, for the latter *are* eligible to every thing, which it is morally possible for men in their situation of life to attain; is certainly calculated to wound a very natural pride, in the Roman Catholic noblemen and gentlemen, and therefore to create, among that very small portion of the Roman Catholic community, a well-warranted discontent. But, in the name of common sense, what is it to the Roman Catholic shop-keeper, who gets as many Protestant customers as he can, among those
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who hold such stations; or to the Roman Catholic farmer, who, at all events, will vote for his Protestant landlord; what is it to *them*, whether a Roman Catholic peer, or a Roman Catholic gentleman, be, or be not eligible to fill certain high stations in the state? Stations to which it was utterly impossible either the shop-keeper or the farmer could ever look to themselves, or to the greater part of which, it is ten thousand to one, the Roman Catholic peer or gentleman would ever attain, even were their present ineligibility to fill them, removed?

However, with respect to the peer or gentleman of the Catholic community, the question is not, whether there is, or is not, a probability of their ever attaining such stations, were their ineligibility to them removed; but, *that ineligibility* is, itself, a species of stigma, that must be galling to the feelings of men of birth and property, who, otherwise, might be entitled to become, at least, candidates for such stations. As to the middle and lower classes, that is, the great body of the Roman Catholics, such ineligibility to hold the offices, for instance, of Lord Lieutenant, of Lord High Chancellor, of Commander in Chief, &c. &c. it would be ludicrous in the extreme to imagine, that it could be felt by them, even as a stigma, or that it could gall *their* feelings, whose situation in life produced *other* ineligibilities, just as powerful as any legal one, to prevent the possibility of its ever entering their thoughts that they could attain to such stations.

We must, therefore, renounce our understandings—we must adopt the imbecility and credulity of the earliest childhood—were we to give credit to the author of the address, when he states this circumstance, as being a cause which had greatly increased the existing disturbances:—Who excited? who committed those disturbances? Certainly not the Roman Catholic peer,

peer, or the Roman Catholic gentleman, who had stakes of landed property in the country, and who were the *only* parties aggrieved by this circumstance; but the very lowest class of the Roman Catholic community, who were neither aggrieved nor affected by it at all!—who formed precisely that description and part of the Roman Catholic body, which had been placed in all respects, upon a footing with their Protestant fellow-subjects, of the same class in life; and who in the course of the disturbances, to which the author alludes, carried on their warfare against their Roman Catholic brethern, whether gentlemen or farmers, with the same hostility as against the other inhabitants of the country!

It is indeed almost irksome to refute arguments, so evidently, so palpably erroneous.—However, “the treatment of his majesty’s Roman Catholic subjects,” must also, it is evident, be totally struck out of the author’s catalogue, of the causes of the existing disturbances.

To return, therefore, to the discontents which may prevail, and not without foundation, among the higher classes of the Roman Catholic body, the aristocracy of that community.

It is, perhaps, to be regretted, that when in 1794, the political *principle*, which could alone justify Roman Catholic political *exclusion*, was *totally given up*, that any of those political exclusions, should have been suffered to remain; it was preserving the hardship, and at the same time acknowledging the injustice of imposing it. However, it is to be observed, that it could not then be expected, that all things were to give way to the wishes of the Roman Catholics; *they* were not the *only* subjects of the crown, though a very respectable and considerable portion of them;—some attention was certainly due to the sense, the feelings,

ings, or even the prejudices of the Protestants; and without at all discussing the propriety of the Catholic measure of 1794, it is certain that the Protestant mind was not, at that period, ripe for all that was *then* granted, and consequently it could not at such a time, by any means be reconciled, to still farther concessions.

It is to be recollected too, that the Roman Catholic aristocracy took no lead in that business; they did not attend the meetings of the Roman Catholics, where their presence might have moderated the language held at those meetings; a language certainly too democratical for the mixed nature of the British constitution, and consequently too democratical to be held by persons, who were candidates for a participation, not merely of all the benefits, but of all the powers of that constitution; a language also somewhat, and perhaps unavoidably infected by French principles, which then began to gain ground in this country.—And, lastly, what most of all must have given offence to the British government, it should be remembered, with what headlong violence, the self-created leaders of the Catholic body, fell in with all the schemes of the Parliamentary reformers of the day, immediately after the favours obtained, and solicited by the Roman Catholics themselves, at the hands of the English cabinet. That all these circumstances should have produced in that cabinet, an alienation of mind, from the Catholic cause, is what was naturally to be expected.

Enough has been said to account for the Roman Catholic aristocracy, not having hitherto obtained, what remained to be granted to them. It is only necessary now to add, that there is no man who has the capacity of observing and reflecting, who has watched the progress of opinion, who has seen the change that within the last three years, has in this country, taken place

place in the Protestant mind; and the effects upon the understandings of all men, produced by the present most extraordinary and eventful times, that must not be in his conscience convinced, that the period cannot be distant; nay, that it must be very near, when all heart-burnings and dissensions, upon this remaining branch of a question, that in all its various parts, has so long agitated the country; shall be forever laid asleep; by the arrival of that happy day for Ireland, when all her sons shall form but one people, and but one community, whom christianity shall unite, as its holy precepts teach, in fraternal affection:—when religion shall be only a question between man and his Creator: when in all the intercourse of civil and political life; in all the friendly offices of society; in all the social duties of citizens, the Protestant shall know of no difference between him and the Catholic; the Catholic know of none between him and the Protestant; save only, that it is at different altars, that they both worship the same God.

The last, but infinitely most important question, that remains to be considered, is the present state of representation in the House of Commons.

To deny the existence of the many and the great abuses, which in the lapse of time, and mutation of things, have taken place in that system of representation, would be an insult to the common sense of every thinking man. That abuses will inevitably arise in every human institution, is a fact too decidedly proved, by the invariable experience of times past and present, to admit of a single doubt: And that such abuses in our own constitution, have long fixed the public attention upon them, cannot be controverted. He who should say, that these abuses have not excited among the enlightened and well informed part of the community, (for the mass of the people are too ignorant of their nature, and too far removed from their effects,

effects, to feel much interest on the subject,) who should say, that they have not excited a very great and very general discontent, would assert what he did not himself believe, and what he knew would impose upon no man.

That it should be in the power of an individual, because owner of a spot of ground, which once had, but no longer has inhabitants; to nominate two representatives of the people, appears monstrous, on the very first blush of it :—That borough bargains should be so open, avowed, and notorious, out of doors—and yet that there should be such an affectation of constitutional integrity within doors—that were a member barely to state upon his legs, in the House, any of those bargains in which he was concerned, and of which he makes no manner of secret in private, it would be deemed a breach of privilege, his words would be taken down, and himself ordered into custody ; there is, in all this, such a ludicrous inconsistency between principle and practice, such a ridiculous mixture of constitutional prudery and political profligacy—it converts one part of the representative system into so contemptible a farce, so insulting a mockery of what are admitted and declared to be, the constitutional rights of the People, that we cannot be surprised at the clamour it has created, and the reiterated applications to parliament, for the reform of so glaring an abuse. It may, however, be maintained, with the strictest truth, that such are the various and perplexing difficulties, in which the question of Reform is involved, that if none was ever more frequently discussed, none appears, at the same time, to have been less understood—or upon which, as to the mode of remedying the evil, a greater diversity of opinions has prevailed.

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It is, therefore, more a matter of regret, than of surprise, that nothing has hitherto been done in this respect, to satisfy the public mind. And it is, perhaps, much to be lamented, that no plan had been devised, which could, with safety, have been adopted, *previous* to the revolution in France:---for before that event had unhinged the minds of men, the spirit which had gone forth in these kingdoms, was simply, the *spirit of Reform*: it *then* walked *alone*; it might have been amicably met---and its fair and constitutional demands beneficially acceded to; for to those demands, the principles of the constitution, revered as they then were, would have prescribed just and accurate limits:—But now, the spirit of Reform is accompanied by a fierce associate, its pretended friend, and real enemy—the daring spirit of Innovation, which, scorning every ancient principle, sets no boundaries to its career of destruction. At the *present period*, therefore, Reform being thus coupled with Innovation—how much does it not increase the danger, and multiply the difficulties which have ever attended the long agitated question, of correcting the abuses in our representative system.

It must be admitted, that objecting to the *time*, when arguments are wanting against the measure itself, is a stale and paltry trick—frequently resorted to, in order to skulk from a question which its opponents dare not fairly meet; and no consideration of the circumstances in which the country may find itself, whether as to peace or war—as to a prosperous, or declining state—can, with a shadow of truth, or of common sense, be urged as an argument against a Parliamentary Reform:---But if no particular state of the *country itself*, can form a just plea against entering upon the work of constitutional reformation—it is as decidedly true, that the particular state, not of the

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country, but of the *minds of men*, may furnish the most unanswerable objection, for commencing a work—of which no one, while their minds *are* in that state, (and for that reason) can possibly foresee the end.

If ever a political event occurred, if ever political doctrines were propagated, peculiarly calculated to unfit the minds of men, in these countries, for a sober and judicious consideration of a moderate Parliamentary Reform; or to render it improbable, that with such a Reform they would be satisfied; and consequently to leave us without any security, that the *new modelling* of the constitution would not be their object, instead of recurring to its first principles—the French Revolution is that event—and the principles it has taught, are those political doctrines.

The reason of this is obvious:—Prior to the establishment of a new constitution in France, that of Great Britain was, compared to the other ancient governments of Europe, considered as a model of perfection,---and was the pride and boast of, at that time, by themselves considered, the fortunate possessors. It was the *political bible* of our politicians—from which alone they drew all the principles, and all the maxims, which were to be their guides in reforming any abuses that might have crept into the practice of a constitution, in theory so perfect:—All reform, founded upon such principles and maxims, must have been perfectly consonant to the spirit and genius of the constitution;---but the new government of France appears to have been considered, by too many of our politicians, as a new political gospel—that has produced too many apostates from their own venerable political bible, the British constitution.—Dazzled by the glare of the *new lights*, of this foreign political gospel, it is *there* they search for principles

ciples and maxims, to guide them in the work of reforming their own ancient, tried, and once revered constitution. A Reform founded upon these novel principles and maxims, drawn from a *new* government, so very differently constructed from our own, cannot be consonant with its genius and spirit: no—it may new model, but will not restore to us the venerable fabric, as it was framed by our ancestors—and under which their posterity have prospered, for such a length of years, the envy of all other nations.

To urge, therefore, the *present time*, as an argument against entering into the question of Parliamentary Reform, is no longer a paltry trick, resorted to for the purpose of skulking from that question: no—it is an argument, founded in reason, principle, and observation. But, says the author of the address, “combat the spirit of Democracy by the spirit of Liberty—the wild spirit of democratic liberty, by the regulated spirit of organized liberty.”—Is he sure, that he understands the regulated spirit of organized liberty, as it may most decidedly exist under the British constitution?—when he says, “that Parliament should be in contact with the People, always, and with the minister, *never*—except the People should be in contact with him;”—when he exclaims---“Oh, unthrifty People! who ever surrendered that invaluable right of *paying* your own representatives;”---when he totally excludes all influence, whatever, of the crown, from the Parliamentary constitution of these realms---is he sure that he has studied the parliamentary *history* of our constitution?---has he watched the progress of the power of the House of Commons?---has he observed the total *annihilation* of the prerogatives of the crown, as acting independently of the other two branches of

the legislature? Does he perceive, that the government of the state now virtually resides in the House of Commons? Does he perceive that the crown does and can exercise no power whatever, but through the medium of that house? Is he prepared, in order to have an *uninfluenced* House of Commons, to restore to the crown all the prerogatives it possessed during the reign of the house of Tudor, when certainly the House of Commons was uninfluenced by it, through corruption, whatever it might have been through terror?---or is he prepared to take from the House of Commons all the powers they have since acquired, and exercised for upwards of a century? For you must allow the crown either prerogative or influence; deprived of both, it could not maintain itself thro' one session of Parliament? Is he prepared to do all this? If so, who would wish to return to the regimen of the house of Tudor?---or, who would wish to see restored the reign of a rump Parliament, in the first instance, or that of a Protector, in the second?—Yet the political principles of the author, as stated in the address, lead directly to one or the other of these events. Must we not, therefore, pause, before we embrace a Parliamentary Reform, under such auspices?

Surely it is better to wait till the present political fever of the mind shall have passed away. Who would suffer his friend, in the delirium of a fever, to dispose of his property? Who would suffer a nation, in the delirium of a political fever, to dispose of what ought to be dearer to them than their property—the constitution of their country? Let us, then, wait, till this fever is allayed. Let us wait till one or two years of peace in France, shall have proved their new form of government, and the new principles upon which

which it is founded.—Both are as yet untried—and must continue so while other nations wage war against the people who have adopted them.

The admiration of the apostates from the venerable political bible of our old British constitution, to the new gospel of France, may by that time have cooled; and returning to the paths of their ancestors, they may then lead the way to a reform, founded upon those principles and maxims which are the life of that regulated spirit of organized liberty, with which the author of the address desires us to combat the wild spirit of democratic liberty.

Yes,—such a reform as this must be devoutly wished for, by every friend to the crown, and to the Constitution of which the Crown forms so essential a part;—and such a reform, at the proper period, ought, and most probably will take place.

In the mean time let this great, this most important question be thoroughly investigated, and compleatly understood. What, at the beginning of these observations, was said respecting the political principles and conduct of France; applies only to the outset of her career:—When left to herself, every day will prove some error in those principles, and every improvement she will adopt in practice, will be a departure from them. In the resolutions lately entered into, by the council of five hundred, and the steps pursued by them against Political clubs, we already see measures to the full as strong, as the Convention bill, and the bill against seditious meetings, here and in England. Would our reformists copy only the early folly of the French, at the first burst of a mad enthusiasm, when as ignorant of the true principles of Liberty, as of the means of enjoying it, they presented to indignant Europe only scenes of horror and of bloodshed,—and not avail themselves of their subsequent

subsequent wisdom and moderation, in which they may daily improve?---Wait then, and the future conduct of France, the future events that in all human probability will take place in that hitherto distracted country, whether to consolidate their present Republic, or to new model their government, will all tend to prove the truth, and justness, of the principles, and maxims of our own Constitution.

Guided by those principles and maxims, the genial spirit of Reform, will then be directed, by the light of truth;---It will approach the reverend fabric, so long a monument of human wisdom, and still retaining all the capacities of continuing such, to the latest time,---it will approach it, with tenderness and veneration:---It will be sober, judicious and deliberate in its progress---it will not appear arrayed in terrors, and armed for destruction:---It will come as the dove, with the olive branch, as the harbinger of peace, and as the promise of future blessings---Far otherwise the bold and hazardous march of all daring INNOVATION---blind and fierce in its course, it can only lead mankind into the dreary waste of civil confusion, civil vengeance, civil bloodshed, and the unutterable horrors of ever destructive ANARCAY.

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